

BOOK REVIEWS

"Color Cinematography"; Adrian Bernard Klein, *American Photographic Pub. Co.*, Boston, Mass., 1936; 337 pp.

A long needed book and one that should be enthusiastically received. The author has boldly attempted to include in 337 pages all the theoretical, historical, economic, and aesthetic aspects of color photography as they should apply and as they have been applied to the professional motion picture field.

After a 21-page historical sketch, the author launches into the theory of the complete problem of reproducing in the mind of an observer the effect of the original object, condensing it into 88 pages. Then follows chapters on additive and subtractive processes in which all those of importance are given in as great detail as was available to the author at the time of writing. Perhaps the greatest value to be derived from the book by a serious student of color photography will come from the careful analysis of these processes. Major Klein, although frankly and openly biased on the question, has presented reasons why most of them can never succeed, and his analyses merit careful consideration.

Chapter IV is devoted to the optics of beam-splitting cameras for obtaining color-separation negatives, and Chapter V covers the use of the so-called bi-pack system for achieving the same result. In Chapter VI the author returns to the theory of analysis and synthesis, giving a somewhat more consistent treatment of the question than space permitted in the first hasty survey; and in Chapter VII under the heading of *Phenomena of Color Vision and the Making of Films in Color*, he discusses after-images, color fatigue, simultaneous contrast, color and spatial harmony, color standards, color scores and the future, economically and aesthetically. An appendix reprints the *Glossary of Color Terms* of the Color Committee of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers.

The book is well written, contains a wealth of valuable material, and at the same time is pleasant reading. Considering the nature of the task and the space available, the author must be complimented upon the quantity of material included. The beginning student of the subject, however, will do well to read slowly and consider carefully as he reads. The facility of Major Klein's writing, we are afraid, may lead many into feeling that they know all about the subject after one reading, and so perhaps tend to increase the number of inexperienced experts that the Major so justly condemns.

To mention an omission in a book of this sort is little short of injustice, and yet, after a rather frightening discussion of the effects of after-images and color fatigue, it rather surprised the reviewer to find no mention of a subject that has caused much more confusion in practice—the problem of psychological white. It is well known in physiological optics that an untrained—and perhaps also a trained—observer tends to accept as white the general illumination of his surroundings. A layman, confronted in daylight surroundings with a picture that reproduced exactly the hue, contrast, and saturation of the room in which he spent the previous evening would simply denounce the picture as obviously

ridiculous. The same holds for a picture taken half an hour before sundown. On the other hand, he would *not* insist that artificial light is not at all yellow. The problem becomes, then, one of reproducing what the person who sees the picture *thinks he would have seen* if he were present. By the same reasoning it seems to the reviewer that the situation in the theaters is somewhat less of a problem than it appears to the author of this book. If the sequences are correctly *balanced* for color, then there is a very considerable range of color-temperature through which the color of the projection light may vary without unpleasant consequences, provided only that it remains constant during the entire picture!

We were surprised to learn on page 103 that all color negatives should be developed to a gamma of about 0.65, and that an observer whose color response is not normal would not enjoy a motion picture in natural color—but enough, it is a good book.

R. M. EVANS

“Cine Titling Simplified”; H. B. Abbott, *Link House Publications, Ltd.*, London, 1936; 83 pp.

An amateur film without titles is usually rather uninteresting, and the author comments aptly in his introduction—“Every cine film that is worth taking is worth editing and titling.” He also points out that the book is not intended to cover the subject of editing; only that of titling. Styles of letters are discussed, and various commercial titling outfits are described. Chapters deal with size and design of title cards, camera distances, and supplementary lenses. If he so desires, the amateur may develop his own title films, and directions for this are included. Special effects are covered in the closing chapter. The handbook is well illustrated and indexed.

G. E. MATTHEWS

“Documentary Film”; Paul Rotha, *Faber & Faber, Ltd.*, London, 1936; 272 pp.

According to the publisher’s review, the word *documentary* has the connotation, *providing evidence*. The documentary film, therefore, is intended to provide evidence of the subject matter of the world in which we live, “its climates, peoples, occupations, and problems.” The *Times* (London) defines it as “the art of skilled and faithful reporting, depending for its success upon the ability to use the camera to build up an interesting and dramatic picture of the life led and the work done in the world of everyday reality.”

The book is divided into four sections, as follows: *I.* Introduction to Cinema; *II.* The Evolution of the Documentary; *III.* Some Principles of Documentary; *IV.* Documentary in the Making. An appendix lists the documentary directors and their films. There are 63 illustrations from documentary films.

G. E. MATTHEWS